

**Library Board Meeting  
January 2012  
Library Strategic Plan Update – Goal #11**

**GOAL #11: Alameda adults and teens with low literacy skills will improve their ability to read and write in order to meet their personal goals.**

Objective 1: *Alameda Reads* will maintain a minimum of 50 tutor-learner pairs annually.

To more accurately reflect the number of tutors and learners who participate in *Alameda Reads* annually, it is important to look at the number of tutors who volunteer and the number of learners served annually. At any one time, there are usually 30-40 tutor-learner pairs. Because of the (paid) staffing at *Alameda Reads*, there is not the capacity to maintain 50 tutor-learner pairs concurrently.

The numbers below are from the State Report submittal from the following years:

2008/09: Learners-75 Tutors-60

2009/10: Learners-55 Tutors-45

2010/11: Learners-66 Tutors-51

Small group classes are an important aspect of *Alameda Reads*. There are 12+ learners in the program who either never had a tutor or have graduated from working with a tutor, who participate in the small group classes. Newly assessed learners who are waiting to be matched with a tutor are strongly encouraged to participate in the small group classes.

Objective 2: Each year 90% of the learners in *Alameda Reads* will achieve at least one predetermined personal goal.

Goal-setting, goal progress and goal attainment are fundamental components of the work that tutor-learner pairs focus on. 100% of the learners achieve at least one of their goals, and 80% achieve two or more of their goals.

Goals that learners have successfully reached:

- Learn the alphabet, letters and sounds
- Read a book/newspaper/magazine
- Write a letter
- Pass part or all of the GED
- Learn to use the computer
- Search the Internet
- Share a book with children
- Help children with homework
- Interact with school/teachers
- Improve their job readiness skills

Objective 3: Use of the literacy collection will increase by 10% each year.

Currently there are 215 items designated as part of the literacy collection.

Circulation Calendar Years

2008 = 187 or 15 per month

2009 = 224 or 19 per month

2010 = 265 or 22 per month

2011 = 215 or 22 per months (over 8 months)

Circulation Fiscal Years

2008-2009 = 194 or 16 per month

2009-2010 = 271 or 23 per month

2010-2011 = 284 or 24 per month

2011-2012 = 66 or 17 per month (over 4 months)

The numbers show a steady increase in usage from 2008 to 2011.

*Activities under consideration:*

1. Provide resources for local literacy related agencies.

Alameda Reads works with a number of community partners in different capacities. In general, the program shares publicity resources and provides referrals. This year (2011), Literacy Director Sue Mark has been working to build a strong, collaborative relationship with the Alameda Adult School. She has been working with the GED Coordinator to offer one-on-one tutoring to students in the Adult School GED program. Alameda Reads will also be placing a tutor in one of the GED classes.

Alameda Reads current community partners include:

- Alameda Adult School
- College of Alameda
- Friends of the Alameda Free Library
- Alameda Library Foundation
- Alameda Family Services
- Alameda Recreation & Parks Department

In 2008 and 2009 Alameda Reads was fortunate to hire two AmeriCorps workers (1/2 time each). The AmeriCorp program was co-sponsored by the State Library to provide low cost staffing assistance to literacy programs state-wide. Those two AmeriCorps workers planned and hosted the 'Walk-A-Mile' event for two years. 'Walk-A-Mile', was a family oriented event which was both a fundraiser for Alameda Reads and was a powerful way to raise awareness of literacy issues in Alameda. For those events, Alameda Reads garnered support from local merchants.

In addition, since 2008, Alameda Reads has been assisting the First Five Literacy parent-child pre-school that is coordinated by Alameda Recreation & Parks and the Boys & Girls Department of the Library. Four times a year Alameda Reads provides an interactive family literacy presentation and free books for children.

**Early Learning with Families/Books in a Box Program:** This was initiated by Alameda Reads in collaboration with the Boys & Girls Department at the Library. The purpose of this project was to increase library visibility, build positive impressions about the library, and serve those families not consistently using the library by bringing storytime services to low income preschools.

Volunteers were trained to visit classrooms once a month, read to the children, and model storytime with songs, movement, and fingerplays. There are now 25 themed crates and about 10 trained volunteers. Over 20 sites are regularly receiving storytimes utilizing different themed crates every month. This program continues under joint grant administered by ARPD and the School Resource Services division of Boys & Girls Department of the Library. There are a few Alameda Reads tutors who also volunteer to visit the classrooms.

2. Provide life skills classes for learners with low literacy skills.

Alameda Reads provides a range of small group classes for the learners and tutors each year. One of Sue's goals to make sure Alameda Reads offers at least one class weekly. Newly assessed learners who have not yet been matched with a tutor have the chance to immediately take advantage of Alameda Reads program services. Some of the teachers for these classes are hired as contract employees although many of these teachers are volunteers. There are usually between 5-14 learners in a small group class.

**2008-09**

**News You Can Use:** A current events reading analysis and vocabulary building class. Class met for 2 hours once a month, every month.

**Book Club:** A reading, writing and critical thinking class. Class met for 1.5 hours once a month, every month.

**Everyday Grammar Skills:** A basic grammar class to help learners with practical life skills writing. Class met for 2 hours weekly for one month.

**2009-10**

**News You Can Use:** A current events reading analysis and vocabulary building class. Class met for 2 hours once a month, every month.

**Book Club:** A reading, writing and critical thinking class. Class met for 1.5 hours once a month, every month.

**Writing Tune-Up:** A life-skills based writing class. Class met for 2 hours once a week for 10 weeks.

2010-11

**News You Can Use:** A current events reading analysis and vocabulary building class. Class met for 2 hours once a month, every month.

**Book Club:** A reading, writing and critical thinking class. Class met for 1.5 hours once a month, every month.

**Writing Tune-Up:** A life-skills based writing class. Class met for 2 hours once a week for 8 weeks.

**Vocabulary Building:** A life-skills based vocabulary and writing class. Class met for 2 hours once a week for 6 weeks.

**Folklore & More:** A critical thinking, reading and writing class. Class met for 2 hours once a week for 4 weeks.

**New Learner Class:** A reading and writing class focused on goal setting skills. Class met for 2 hours once a week for 4 weeks.

2011-12

**News You Can Use:** A current events reading analysis and vocabulary building class. Class meets for 2 hours once a month, every month.

**Book Club:** A reading, writing and critical thinking class. Class meets for 1.5 hours once a month, every month.

**New Learner Class:** A reading and writing class focused on goal setting skills. Class met for 2 hours once a week for 8 weeks.

**Reading & Writing for Me:** A reading and writing class focused on goal setting skills. Class met for 2 hours twice a week for 10 weeks.

**Writing on the Computer:** A basic computer class focused on Co-Writer, a piece of software that supports literacy skills. Class met for 1.5 hours once a week for 3 weeks.

Upcoming Classes:

**Healthy Living:** A reading, writing and math class focused on health issues. Class will meet for 2 hours once a week for 6 weeks (starting in January 2012).

**Writing on the Computer:** A basic computer class focused on Co-Writer, a piece of software that supports literacy skills. Class will meet for 2 hours once a week for 6 weeks (starting in February 2012).

**Reading & Writing for Me:** A reading and writing class focused on goal setting skills. Class will meet for 2 hours twice a week for 6 weeks (starting in March 2012).

3. Provide one to one tutoring for learners with low literacy skills.

This is the primary mission for Alameda Reads. If a learner arrives at Alameda Reads with high level skills but does not have time or cannot afford community college classes, then Alameda Reads allows the individual to attend the small group classes. High level learners are not provided an individual tutor.

4. Provide access to core technology through specially designed computer skills classes for learners with low literacy skills.

Until recently, Alameda Reads had not been providing computer classes. The “computer lab” at the Alameda Reads Office (Veteran’s Building site) has two very old computers. However, one of the tutors, a retired computer scientist, has worked with 5 different learners on an individual basis to boost their basic computer skills (since 2008).

This dedicated tutor is now teaching basic computer skills classes for Alameda Reads in the computer lab at the Main Library.

5. Host an annual Library Literacy Event.

#### **2008-09 & 2009-10**

With the AmeriCorps workers Alameda Reads was able to boost its ability to promote literacy awareness in general and the Alameda Reads program in specific. The program had two AmeriCorps workers for 2 consecutive fiscal years before the AmeriCorp/State Library partnership discontinued. The program has felt a significant void since the AmeriCorps workers for literacy are no longer available.

**Literacy, Food & Fitness:** A family-oriented summer series taught twice a week, once at the West End Library and once at the Main Library, was a program led by an AmeriCorps worker who followed a curriculum from AmeriCorps. The class was open to the general public and had a great turnout.

**Read for the Record:** Alameda Reads, in conjunction with AmeriCorps (parent organization) and the California Library Literacy Services, is proud to be participating in this year's "Read for the Record." Through sponsors, Alameda Reads was able to provide over 500 children with the book Corduroy to add to their home libraries. The local pre and elementary schools also participated in this project.

**Walk-A-Mile for Literacy:** 'Walk-A-Mile', a family oriented event, was both a fundraiser for Alameda Reads and was a powerful way to raise awareness of literacy issues in Alameda. This great event was possible to implement because of the extra staff support provided by two AmeriCorps workers. The event raised \$6,000 for the program in two years.

**Family Fun Day:** Funded by a grant from Early Learning with Families (ELF), the day-long event was full of activities at the Alameda Main Library that helped encourage families to make literacy an every-day part of their lives. This event continues but is now hosted solely by the Boyd & Girls Department of the Library and is the "kick-off" to summer reading.

2010-11

**Window of Words / International Literacy Day:** Alameda Reads made a big push to create a stronger public presence for Alameda Reads by leveraging International Literacy Day. Alameda Reads hosted the "Window of Words" at the Main Library in celebration of International Literacy Day on September 8<sup>th</sup>. Hundreds of library visitors enjoyed both reading the posted words and adding their favorites to the mix. Three Alameda Reads learners volunteered throughout the day, interacting with library visitors to practice speaking with new people. This was a great way for them to expand their community service skills. The "Window of Words" was so popular that the Library kept it up for a whole week.

For the month of September, Alameda Reads installed a dozen tri-fold information panels, on the Main Library's second floor, to illustrate the everyday challenges adults with low literacy skills face. In addition, Alameda Reads created a calendar for the month of September that expressed ways in which anyone can improve their reading and writing skills on a daily basis. The calendar was widely distributed to all library outlets, the Alameda Adult School, to the Alameda Reads program members and was also posted on the Alameda Reads website.